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Bangalore Mirror

TEMP Max 28 | Min 20 | Humidity 66% Mostly Cloudy Sensex 82,555 | Nifty 25,279 | Gold 71,240 | Silver 81,179 | Dollar 83.96 | Euro 92.68 | GBP 110.00

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ROCK BOTTOM

90% of wells being monitored in Bengaluru record considerable drop in water level over 10 years

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CAMERA EFFECT

On B'luru-Mysuru Expressway, just slowing down for cameras won't work as speeding fines will apply even in camera-free zones

Pothole-ridden roads are making it tough for BMTC buses to keep to schedule; frequent break-downs and costly repairs are causing further trouble for corporation's drivers

BOARD THE BUS, GET A ROLLER-COASTER RIDE

Drivers say only dedicated lanes, or well-repaired roads can help them stick to timetable

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Despite Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar's diktat to fill all potholes in the city within a fortnight, the prevailing belief is that Bengaluru may not be rid of potholes as several deadlines to potholes have not been met in the past. While motorists face the brunt of traversing through these pothole-ridden roads, it is the Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) bus drivers that have to go through this tough path daily as a part of their duty.

Sources said that amidst heavy traffic, the deteriorating roads are disrupting BMTC bus drivers' routines, causing buses to frequently break down. As a result, buses are not reaching their destinations on time, leading to arguments between passengers and bus staff. A journey that should take an hour now requires an additional 45 minutes to an hour and a half.

Notice Issued

BMTC buses are expected to reach specific locations within a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 »

"Every day, at least 5-6 buses break down. Even on regular days, vehicles must be driven slowly on pothole-filled roads. When it rains, extra caution and slower speeds are necessary

— BMTC bus driver

Utter feeling of powerlessness

BBMP fails to clear electricity bill on time and Bescom promptly snaps service. Kalpalli Electric Crematorium had to run on generator for 1 day

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The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) that has been so busy locking malls and business establishments for non-payment of property tax, that it probably forgot to pay the electricity bill of a crematorium. The disconnection of electricity at Kalpalli Electric Crematorium on August 29, came as a shock to the bereaved families who had to struggle to cremate the mortal remains of their relatives.

Workers at the crematorium were compelled to switch on the diesel generator to cremate a few bodies and ask a few others who had brought their loved one's bodies to go to other crematoriums situated at Wilson Garden or Hebbal.

It is said that the Bengaluru Electricity Supply Company (Bescom) employees disconnected electricity supply to the Kalpalli Electric Crematorium as the BBMP officials failed to clear the dues on time despite repeated reminders.

The BBMP then cleared dues worth Rs 23,83,220 on August 29 only after the supply of electricity was stopped. It is not clear whether the entire amount is the dues pertaining to the crematorium or if it includes other BBMP offices. The BBMP Deputy Controller (Finance East Zone) issued a cheque on August 29.

The disconnection of electricity to the crematorium has riled up citizens and social activists. They criticised the BBMP and the Bescom officials for disconnecting electricity to the electric crematorium without

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 »

3 THINGS TO DO

01 Art exhibition

Immerse in an extraordinary art exhibition titled "Unknowns 8" by The Unknowns Art Group, featuring the works of 30 young artists from 15 different states across India. This year's exhibit promises to be a captivating showcase of contemporary Indian art, reflecting the country's diverse artistic traditions while presenting a unified vision that transcends regional boundaries. In addition to the main exhibit, the gallery will host discussions, workshops, and presentations, providing visitors with the opportunity to engage directly with the artists and gain deeper insights into their work.

Where: Dwija Art Gallery, Residency Road
When: September 6 to 16

02 World fusion music

Experience an mesmerising performance as part of the VARI Album Tour, led by the gifted Varijashree Venugopal. The album is a captivating fusion of Indian classical and folk traditions with global music influences. Inspired by the concept of water—fluid, ever-moving, and life-sustaining—VARI encapsulates the essence of purity, clarity, and transparency. The tour performance will feature Michael League on bass, Vivek Santosh on keys, Pramath Kiran on percussion, Apoorva Krishna on violin, and Jayachandra Rao on mridangam, creating an unforgettable evening of world fusion music that transcends cultural boundaries.

Where: Windmills, Whitefield
When: September 6 and 7, 9:30 pm onwards

03 Painting showcase

Explore 'Is Tarah Bhi', a painting exhibition showcasing Amitabh Ashesh's original work on 'Yufism,' at BIC. Each painting is complemented with a titular poem, nucleating its meanings and letting viewers engage in parallely via literary associations. Collective recollection of similar scenery in quotidian Indian life abounds. Bengaluru's famed Brigade Road, home cooking, and street dogs fed by kind strangers are given a fresh perspective too.

Where: Bangalore International Centre (BIC), Domlur
When: September 7 to 11, 11 am to 8:30 pm

Watchful eyes: Webcasting now extends to unit tests

Education department announces 20 new measures to improve SSLC outcomes, with tracking progress, special classes, buddy pairing, and more

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This year's SSLC results hit a new low, and the authorities claimed that the introduction of tough surveillance measures like webcasting had curbed mass copying and improved the sanctity of exams. Meanwhile, few parents and teachers had raised concerns that the webcasting had increased anxiety among the students. However, as the debate continues, the education department has decided to extend webcasting to this year's unit tests as well. Additionally, 20 measures have been announced to improve SSLC outcomes.

Last year, webcasting was implemented to reduce malpractices during exams, which successfully curbed cheating but did not significantly improve SSLC results. Initially, the SSLC pass rate dropped to 54 per cent, but after the addition of 20 grace marks, it increased to 74 per cent. The opportunity for re-examinations further boosted the pass percentage to 85 per cent.

New measures

According to a senior official, schools and colleges will now monitor unit tests through live video. Teachers are instructed to assess and track student progress closely. Moreover, special classes focussing on key subjects will be held daily, and the syllabus for annual exams must be completed by December 2024. "We are determined to enhance SSLC and PUC performance. Hence, the Department of School Education and Literacy (DSEL) has introduced several initiatives, including the use of webcasting for unit tests. Furthermore, to improve writing skills, students will be required to write two pages daily and engage in rigorous reading. Additionally, a question bank for each unit will be prepared," said a senior official.

A 'buddy pairing' initiative is planned to support slow learners

> **"Schools & colleges will now monitor unit tests through live video. Teachers are instructed to assess, track student progress closely** –Senior official

Buddy pairing' initiative

Besides, the department has decided to support slower learners by launching a 'Buddy Pairing' initiative, where struggling students will be paired with academically stronger peers. Progress reports will be shared with parents every 15 days, and if a student is absent for 3-4 days, the School Development and Monitoring Committee (SDMC) and other stakeholders will visit their home to enquire and ensure they return to school. Schools are also advised to implement a wake-up call system to motivate students to be more engaged in their studies.

"Teachers will be assigned students based on their academic performance levels, and schools will be adopted by district and taluk-level education officials. Teachers and lecturers will undergo retraining to enhance their effectiveness in improving student outcomes. The government's 20-point program focuses on improving exam results, with district and taluk-level officials responsible for ensuring its successful implementation," added an official.

Need for tough measures

Educationists are batting for stricter measures to curb malpractice. Dinesh Gowda, an educationist, said that the introduction of webcasting in exam centres is a bold and necessary step toward curbing malpractice. While it may initially cause some anxiety among students, the long-term benefits far outweigh the temporary discomfort. "Tough measures like webcasting not only deter dishonest practices but also instill a sense of discipline and responsibility among students. It is crucial for the education department to continue implementing such initiatives, as they safeguard the future of our students and uphold the standards of our educational institutions," he added.

'No saplings are being planted on lake bunds; planting is done with consultation'

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Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) on Tuesday clarified that its annual tree plantation program at 40 lakes across five city zones is being conducted in consultation with citizens and schoolchildren around the lake premises.

The planting of saplings at various lakes, such as Deepanjali Nagar Lake, Sankey Tank Lake, Sarakki Lake, and Rachenahalli Lake under the program, was done in consultation with local groups. "Local MLAs, citizens, and children are participating in the plantation program in large numbers. Public consultation sessions with locals, lake groups, and organisations that are involved in lake conservation in respective areas will be held in the future as well," said BBMP Special Commissioner (Forest, Environment and Climate Change Management) Preeti Gehlot.

The clarification was issued in response to an article by BM titled 'Get to root of the matter' published on Sunday after some citizens raised concerns about issues such as lack of consultation with local lake groups, saplings planted on lake bund, and many non-native species being put around lakes, existing saplings not cared for, which were discussed in the story.

The program involves the planting of nearly 20,000 saplings in and around 40 lakes across BBMP zones such as Yelahanka, Mahadevapura, Bommanahalli, RR Nagar, and Dasarahalli. "The initiative is being carried out by the forest department of BBMP. However, officials from the lake department are also involved in making decisions in various aspects, such as the location and number of saplings to be planted," Gehlot said.

About saplings & their maintenance

The number of saplings proposed is an estimate. "Moreover, no saplings are being planted on lake bunds. Instructions regarding this have already been given to the officials from both the departments," added Gehlot. These saplings are from BBMP's nurseries and are of various species, including sampige, honge, wild almond, gooseberry, stream hibiscus, tabebuya, etc. The saplings planted under the program will be maintained by the forest department for three years.

Don't blow it up! Cottonpet traffic police carry out a drive to clamp cases of drink and drive, on Tuesday PICS: KAUSHIK JN

Gang of 4 arrested in scam that opens can of worms

ED uncovers major cyber scam with possible links to human trafficking

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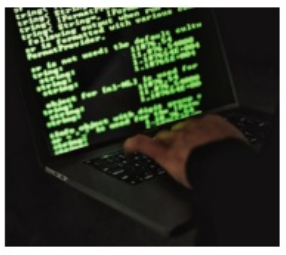
The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) has uncovered a cyber scam with ties to international human trafficking. Investigations reveal that the accused, a gang of four, may be linked to criminal networks operating from the Golden Triangle region, notorious for illicit activities, including drug and human trafficking.

The ED arrested four individuals, identified as Shashi Kumar M (25), Sachin M (26), Kiran S K (25), and Charan Raj C (26) in Bengaluru, on August 21. These men are said to have orchestrated an elaborate online investment scam that duped hundreds of investors across India. The accused lured unsuspecting victims through social media platforms, promising high returns on investments in the stock market via fraudulent apps and this was the modus operandi. These apps falsely then claimed to deal with stocks from well-known companies like Reliance and Tata Power.



Once victims invested their money, the scamsters transferred the funds to bank accounts linked to shell companies they had set up, often using coworking spaces as their addresses. To further obscure the money trail, the funds were converted into cryptocurrency and transferred abroad, making it nearly impossible for authorities to track the illicit proceeds.

During the investigation, the ED conducted 13 search operations under the PMLA Act, leading to the seizure of ₹25 crore in assets, mobile phones, and other digital devices. The arrested individuals have been remanded in custody for seven days as investigations continue.

The ED's investigation is based on multiple FIRs filed across the country, including in Faridabad, Noida, and Bhatinda, where the accused are believed to have defrauded over ₹20 crore from numerous investors. The agency suspects that the scam may be part of a larger network, with further investigations focusing on their links to human trafficking and other cybercrimes. Indian citizens are reportedly lured with job offers and trafficked to this region, where they are forced to work under harsh conditions in online scams like this cyber investment fraud.

2 rowdy sheeters arrested for gold theft

In two separate operations, city police have apprehended two notorious rowdy sheeters linked to gold theft. Both individuals have a history of criminal activities with multiple cases registered against them.

A complaint was filed at the JP Nagar police station on August 14, where a thief attempted to snatch a woman's mangalsutra as she was sleeping near an open window in her house around 9 pm. The victim held on tightly to the chain, but the perpetrator managed to snatch half of it before fleeing.

The police arrested a suspect on August 24 from near Jayadeva Hospital. The suspect was apprehended along with a stolen two-wheeler. During interrogation, the suspect confessed to stealing 60 grams of gold a month earlier, a theft for which an FIR had already been registered at the Bellandur police station. He also admitted to stealing the two-wheeler he was found with.

The police recovered 109.8 grams of gold ornaments, valued at approximately ₹9 lakh, and seized three stolen two-wheelers as part of the investigation.

The accused has over 38 registered cases against him for gold thefts.

The Whitefield police arrested a man involved in multiple house burglaries across the city, recovering gold and silver worth ₹8,00,000. The accused was apprehended by the police on August 25 near the Marathahalli Bridge.

The complainant is a resident of NTR Layout in Marappa Halli Police Station limits. He was away at work on August 17 when his house in Marathahalli was burgled. Around 78 grams of gold ornaments were reported missing.

During the operation, the police recovered 44 grams of gold jewellery from his possession. On August 26, 54 grams of gold jewellery sold by the accused were seized from a jewellery shop in the Parappana Agrahara police station limits. And on August 29, the accused's friend returned 20 grams of gold and 203 grams of silver items that had been given to him by the accused.

The accused is linked to four house theft cases, including one each in Marathahalli, Anekal and Konanakunte, as well as a two-wheeler theft case in Suryanagar.

Speeding car rams, kills elderly woman in Kengeri

A 75- year-old woman died when a car, driven at a high speed hit her while she was crossing the road near the Kengeri TTMC bus stand on Monday.

The woman, identified as Sumithramma, was crossing the road to head towards Bidadi when a car struck her. She fell on the road and suffered severe injuries on her face, arms, and body which led to bleeding wounds. According to the police, the car traveling from Bidadi towards Nayandahalli, was being driven at a high speed and recklessly.

The driver, along with some bystanders, immediately rushed her to the nearby HK hospital. However, due to the severity of her injuries, she was later transferred to Rajarajeshwari hospital for further treatment. The doctors declared her dead on arrival at the hospital.

A complaint has been lodged against the driver of the car.

5 injured as car plunges off flyover after collision

A car collided with a bike and veered off a flyover near the Yeshwantpur Circle on Tuesday at 3.45 am. The driver of the car, bearing a Tamil Nadu registration number, lost control and collided with a bike before plunging off the divider on the flyover. The car was traveling from Sankey Road towards Tumkur Road when the accident happened.

The accident resulted in serious injuries to five individuals - three passengers in the car and two riders on the bike. The impact was so severe that three of the injured are reported to be in critical condition, while the other two have sustained significant injuries. Emergency responders, including police and local residents, quickly arrived at the scene, providing immediate assistance and transporting the injured to a nearby hospital for treatment. The case is being investigated by the Yeshwantpur traffic police to determine the exact cause of the accident. BMB

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All is not well with Bengaluru's water level

90% of wells being monitored have recorded big drop in water level over 10 years

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File photo of one of the seven wells in Cubbon Park, which got renewed as part of rejuvenation project

Central Groundwater Board's recent report shows that over 90% of the wells being monitored in Bengaluru have recorded a considerable fall in decadal (November 2013 to November 2023) water level. CGWB has analysed 24 wells across the city.

While two wells have registered improvement in the groundwater table by two metres above the ground level, 22 have registered a drop in water level. The water table in 17 wells has dropped by two to four metres below ground level, in five wells it has dropped more than four metres below ground level.

To ascertain the depth to water level, CGWB studied 27 wells. The majority of the wells have water levels between five and ten metres below ground level. Three wells were found to have water levels up to two metres below ground level.

> **The need of the hour is to create a granular map of all the bore wells in Bengaluru and across the state to sketch an effective management strategy**
>
> –Shubha Ramachandran, Biome

Experts say while the number of wells being monitored by CGWB to deduce the current level or drop in the level of the groundwater table is not adequate, the outcome is representative of the current scenario and findings do ring alarm bells.

"The level of groundwater table in a city with an area of nearly 1,000 square kilometres cannot be ascertained accurately with just 24 wells. To get the real picture, water level in at least one well in every square kilometre area should be measured. However, the decadal drop underlined by CGWB is expected to look at a high extraction rate in Bengaluru over the last couple of decades. This is evident considering the multifold increase in the number of water tankers and bore wells being registered in the city," said Shubha Ramachandran, water team lead at Biome Environmental Trust.

Experts also underline the need for granular spatial data of all the bore wells in Bengaluru. They opine that CGWB along with Karnataka Groundwater Authority (KGWA) should collate this data at the ward level with the help of a citizen programme.

"The need of the hour is to create a granular map of all the bore wells in Bengaluru and across the state with information such as- bore well depth, water quality, yield, and recharge structure- to sketch an effective management strategy. Creating a spatial map through citizen participation and making the data available in the public domain will go a long way," added Ramachandran.

Temporary relief for commuters on Bannerghatta Road by BMRCL

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BMRCL has temporarily fixed the road which was neglected for years, despite complaints

In a significant development following coverage by Bangalore Mirror, the much-neglected stretch of road near Meenakshi Temple on Bannerghatta Road has finally seen some relief. The road, which had been in a worsening state for years due to ongoing metro construction work at the Gottigere Depot, was temporarily fixed by workers from the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL).

BANGALORE IMPACT MIRROR

This comes after years of mounting frustration among residents and commuters who have been grappling with large potholes, uneven surfaces, and dangerous conditions, especially during the monsoon season. The situation had become untenable, with daily traffic snarls and frequent accidents adding to the woes.

Bangalore Mirror had highlighted the deteriorating state of this crucial stretch, amplifying the voices of the affected residents. This sustained coverage has finally borne fruit, prompting the BMRCL to take action, albeit a temporary one.

Joshua a resident said, "The road is somewhat better now, but it's still just a temporary fix. Some improvements are done, however, we need a permanent solution." Another local shared their frustration and said, "I've seen people fall off their bikes here. It's been horrible, especially for the elderly and children. We are relieved to see some work done."

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Unsafe parking
KR Puram

A large number of heavy vehicles are constantly parked near the traffic police station in KR Puram, posing a significant hazard to students and commuters using the nearby bus stop.

Illegal borewells
Whitefield

Thubarahalli village in Whitefield is alarmingly close to setting a record for the highest number of illegal borewells, which is further depleting the already scarce groundwater supply.

Pedestrians' risks
JC Road

The footpath opposite Mysugar on JC Road is covered in debris, creating an unpleasant and unsafe environment for pedestrians.

Silk swipe ends: 38 sarees worth ₹17.5 lakh seized in JP Nagar

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In a series of saree thefts that spanned several weeks, a well-coordinated gang of women targeted silk saree shops across Bengaluru, making off with silk sarees worth lakhs. However, on August 25, a shopkeeper in JP Nagar outsmarted the thieves, leading to the arrest of four women and the recovery of 38 silk sarees valued at Rs 17.5 lakh.

As the salespeople displayed their finest silk sarees, showcasing intricate designs and vibrant colours, the women executed a distraction. While two of the women kept the sales staff occupied with detailed enquiries about the sarees, the other four discreetly concealed 18 sarees under their clothing. Their strategy was to leave the shop in stages, minimising suspicion. CCTV footage from several incidents shows groups of women entering the stores, browsing casually, and then discreetly concealing the sarees in specially designed bags that prevent security tags from triggering alarms.

This particular incident came to light when six women entered the shop, splitting into pairs to distract the sales staff while two of them discreetly concealed eight sarees under their clothing. The suspicious behaviour of the other four women caught the attention of the shopkeepers, who

Silk sarees on display at a shop

immediately intervened and recovered the 10 sarees from them. The shopkeepers then alerted the Hoysala-112 police, who promptly arrived at the scene, arrested the four women, and took them to JP Nagar Police Station, where a case of theft was registered.

Commissioner of Police B Dayanda recalled that this group of women had previously shoplifted from another store in JP Nagar and in Jayanagar. During the interrogation, the four accused revealed information about their two accomplices who had fled the scene. The investigation also uncovered that the gang had previously stolen 10 silk sarees from another silkhouse in JP Nagar on August 10 and 10 more from a silkhouse under the Jayanagar Police Station jurisdiction on August 24. The stolen sarees had reportedly been handed over to a friend of the accused residing in Koramangala. Following their detailed interrogation, a total of 38 silk sarees were recovered. On August 29, the four accused were produced before the Court for the second time and were remanded to judicial custody. The police are actively searching for the two remaining accused involved in the case, who are currently absconding.

A cloth shop owner in Jayanagar stated, "This has become too common here. On Saturdays and Sundays, the shops are packed with a large crowd, and it's hard to keep track of who's doing what. During that time, some customers bring extra bags and steal. They often take one piece of clothing, hide it in their bag, then bargain for another item and only pay for one. But when they leave, they take two."

Watch your speed even in camera-free zones

PIC FOR REPRESENTATION ONLY

Smart-speeders beware: Now, adhere to speed limits on Bengaluru-Mysuru Expressway or pay fines; new tech tracks vehicles speed based on distance, time

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"Fines will now be based on average speed calculated between tolls, considering time taken to travel. So, adhere to speed limits of 100 km/h or less on expressway –Police official

Bengaluru police have introduced a new enforcement strategy to tackle the smart-speeders on the Bengaluru-Mysuru Expressway, who have been slowing down only when passing through ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) cameras and then speeding up once they believe the cameras are out of sight, increasing the risk of accidents. Speeding penalties will now apply even in camera-free zones. This new regulation enforces speed limits based on distance and time, akin to systems used on roads around Tirumala Hills and state wildlife sanctuaries.

A police official said, "Recently, a vehicle travelling from Ramanagar covered a distance of 20.6 km in 688 seconds. This equated to an average speed of 108 km/h, resulting in a fine from the police department. Similarly, fines will now be based on the average speed calculated between tolls, considering the time taken to travel. So, whether there are cameras or not, it is better to adhere to speed limits of 100 km/h or less on the expressway. The highway has a speed limit of 100 km/h with a 5% tolerance. Vehicles exceeding 105 km/h are fined Rs 1,000, and those exceeding 130 km/h face First Information Reports (FIRs). Since August 1, over 400 FIRs have been filed."

This new technology called 'sectional speed' has resulted in over 1,10,000 cases being filed in August alone. Cameras have been installed at 48 locations on the expressway with the help of ANPR. Some areas have had cameras installed by the police department, while others were done by the National Highways Authority of India. Despite this, vehicles continued to exceed speed limits in areas without cameras. The introduction of STM (Sectional Speed Technology) has led to 89,200 cases (up to August 26). Recently, sectional speed cameras have been recording cases based on data from various apps.

Need for advanced technology

Statistics reveal that 89,200 cases have been filed using sectional speed technology, while ANPR cameras have identified 34,200 speeding violations. According to an official, traditional speed enforcement methods, such as stationary cameras, often fail to address the issue of drivers altering their speed only when approaching cameras, which undermines the effectiveness of these systems. By measuring the average speed of vehicles over a specific distance, sectional speed technology ensures that drivers maintain a consistent speed throughout their journey. "This method not only helps in capturing offenders who speed between camera locations but also discourages erratic driving behaviours that increase the risk of accidents. Furthermore, the use of this technology addresses the limitations of existing enforcement strategies and ensures that penalties are applied more fairly. It helps in creating a safer driving environment by making it clear that speed limits must be adhered to at all times, not just in the vicinity of cameras," a police official added.

Reduction in accidents

According to police reports, there has been a significant reduction in fatalities on the Bengaluru-Mysuru road. In the first eight months of 2023, 147 lives were lost, whereas during the same period this year, the number of deaths has decreased to 50. They attribute this substantial drop to their effective measures aimed at curbing overspeeding.

Swift action against 'provocative' message

The Bike Taxi Welfare Association, an organisation representing bike taxi riders across Karnataka, has taken legal action and filed a formal complaint with the Begur Police Station on Tuesday against an individual who posted a 'provocative' message in their open WhatsApp group.

The BTWA, registered under the Karnataka Societies Act 1960, had recently created an open WhatsApp group to facilitate communication among its members in Bengaluru City. The group was intended to coordinate efforts related to the welfare of bike taxi riders and to plan upcoming events. However, on August 30, a suspicious individual posted a message on the group that was

Bike taxi riders' group files complaint against offensive message on their WhatsApp group

deemed provocative and had criminal intent. The association's members, including key office bearers, immediately reprimanded the individual, condemned the message, and ensured its deletion. The BTWA emphasised that it does not tolerate such behaviour and that the views expressed by the individual do not represent the association's values.

Following the incident, the BTWA convened an urgent meeting of its office bearers, during which it was unanimously decided to pursue legal action against the sender. The police have taken the complaint on record and initiated an investigation into the matter.

The BTWA has reiterated its commitment to maintaining a safe and supportive environment for its members, who rely on bike taxi services to earn their livelihoods and support their families, and vowed to continue working diligently to uphold the welfare and security of bike taxi riders in Bengaluru. –BMB

Home buyers want closure, stricter project completion

Forum meets RERA chief, demands promoters submit documentations to prove project is finished

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K-RERA has not released any circular or guidelines on project closure on the RERA website since 2017

The members of Karnataka Home Buyers Forum demanded Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) Karnataka issue guidelines on the completion of housing projects on the lines of Odisha Real Estate Regulatory Authority for the benefit of home buyers in Karnataka.

The members of Karnataka Home Buyers Forum met Rakesh Singh, newly appointed RERA Karnataka Chairman stating that RERA Karnataka has not released any circular or guidelines on project closure that is available to the public on the RERA website since 2017. "We have observed that the promoters are submitting an affidavit to RERA Karnataka that they will hand over the undivided share of the title to the registered association of allottees but in reality they are not doing it. Unfortunately, RERA Karnataka is showing the project status as closed on its website. Home buyers are getting impacted because of the lack of guidelines issued by RERA Karnataka," said Dhananjaya Padmanabhachar, convener, Karnataka Home Buyers Forum.

The notification of Odisha RERA indicates the documents to be furnished by the promoters before RERA Authority after completing the project.

The Odisha RERA notification also highlights that once the project is complete in all aspects, the money lying in the 70% RERA designated account will be kept as security money for the next five years to meet the expenses for rectification of structural defects within five years of handing over of the property in accordance with section 14 (3) of the Act. It said that once the above is met, then the project will be declared as closed thereafter.

He said that the apartment land is not getting transferred to the flat owners association in the absence of direction from the government. "We request the RERA Chairman to release the Project Closure Policy notification at the earliest so that promoters can start transferring common areas to the registered association of Allottees as per section 17 of RERA 2016. Other states in India including Maharashtra, Odisha have a clear direction from the state government which has been missing in Karnataka for many decades," he said.

Ameya Usgaonkar, a home buyer, has said that as per RERA Act, a promoter is required to submit quarterly reports of project's finances which includes detailed breakup of funds received and used for construction to maintain transparency and accountability of the promoter. "The RERA Authority is obligated and duty bound to go through those reports, identify malpractices, and penalise errant promoters. None of this is enforced by RERA-K due to which homebuyers are inflicted with financial injuries," said Usgaonkar.

> **Home buyers are getting impacted because of the lack of guidelines or circulars issued by RERA Karnataka**
>
> – Convener, Karnataka Home Buyers Forum

Project completion, as per RERA Act and as clarity by Supreme Court in numerous judgements, is when a project is received both occupancy certificate (OC) and completion certificate (CC) which can happen only when the promoter has transferred title of common areas and project's land in favour of the registered association of apartment owners. "Until such time, a project is incomplete and comes under the ambit of the RERA Act. Unfortunately, the Karnataka government and RERA-K neither understood these basics nor took any cue from other states, such as Odisha and Maharashtra, which seem to lead in RERA implementation. RERA-K still gives clean chit to projects with partial OC in blatant contravention of the Act as well as Supreme Court judgments," he said.

Let's embrace fiber & clay Ganesha idols

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Students making clay Ganesha idols at RR Nagar on Tuesday

The demand for fiber Ganesha idols has surged significantly, even a month before the Gouri-Ganesha festival. Growing awareness of eco-friendly celebrations has led many people to choose fiber Ganesha idols that do not require immersion.

This year, the transition to fiber idols has been met with an enthusiastic public response, with some idols now reaching heights of 16 to 18 feet. Several organisations are also expressing interest in renting fiber idols for public displays.

"We have realised that PoP idols are harmful to the environment. While we still have some previously made PoP idols, we now reserve them for film and television shoots. Currently, we are focusing on creating taller, lighter fiber idols and renting them out for public festivals," said M Srinivas, an idol maker and seller from RV Road. He added, "This year, in honor of the 25th anniversary of the Kargil War, we are creating special Ganesha idols, including Kargil Ganesha, Guarantee Ganesha, and Ayodhya Ram Ganesha sets with mantapas."

"When I heard about the new trend of fiber Ganesha idols, I knew it was the perfect solution. What excites me most is that these fiber idols don't require immersion, which means we can celebrate with the same enthusiasm without the guilt of contributing to pollution. The fact that they are lighter yet more durable is a bonus, making them easy to transport and display," said Shravananda K, a resident of Malleswaram.

Clay Ganesha idols

Many residents are opting for clay Ganesha idols this year, with several actively participating in workshops to promote this eco-friendly choice. Sukanya Devaraj, a homemaker, shared, "Every year, I visit Pottery Town to buy clay, which I then use to create Ganesha idols with my children. This tradition not only engages them but also teaches them about sustainable practices."

The HSR Citizen Forum has been organising clay Ganesha making workshops to encourage others to choose clay idols. This year, the workshops have attracted over 130 participants, mostly children, who, under the guidance of Forum volunteers, crafted clay idols. These sessions not only provide hands-on experience but also promote sustainable festival practices and zero-waste celebrations.

IN BRIEF

India's first centre of excellence for active mobility in B'luru

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Bengaluru will now house India's first Centre of Excellence for Active Mobility aimed at promoting sustainable transportation. This centre is the result of a collaboration between the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Sustainable Transportation Lab (IST Lab) and Urban Morph, Bengaluru, formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding. The centre will focus on research, planning, collaboration, and the monitoring and evaluation of human-powered transportation modes such as walking and cycling. Its primary goal is to enhance urban transportation efficiency, whether for full trips or the first and last mile, and to make cities more livable. Additionally, the centre will address equity in mobility across different demographics, including gender, age, economic status, and disabilities, ensuring that public spaces are accessible to all.

Professor Dr Ashish Verma, Convenor of the IISc Sustainable Transportation Lab, said, "The importance of revisiting the past is

> **The centre will facilitate mutual learning and the sharing of best practices**

to secure a sustainable and livable future for cities. In the 1970s and 1980s, many people relied on walking and cycling, these practices need to be revived to build a sustainable future—a vision that the new Centre of Excellence will help realise." The centre operates on several guiding principles. It aims to foster an open collaboration model by bringing together a diverse ecosystem. The centre will articulate a vision for a livable city, driven by Green Urban Mobility and supported by Active Urban Greenways in urban areas. It will also serve as a platform for convening, program management, and communication efforts, enhancing the work of other stakeholders. Membership will be open to government bodies, institutions, civil society, and industry, all of whom will contribute to the centre's objectives. The centre will engage in activities such as capacity building and consulting, which are essential for achieving its goals.

The centre will provide stakeholders across the country with access to high-quality research, planning, and activities, all aimed at helping the nation meet its health, transportation, and climate goals through Active Mobility. Subbaiah TS, Director of Urban Morph, highlighted the need to consolidate efforts across the country, noting that many organisations are already focusing on active mobility. **BMB**

HC: Owners can be punished only if they knew & allowed drug use

High Court relief to 68-year-old who got caught in case involving narcotics at birthday party in his building

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The High Court has emphasised that an owner or occupier of a premises can only be punished under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (NDPS) if they knowingly allow the premises to be used for committing an offence under the Act.

Justice M Nagaprasanna, in a single judge bench ruling, granted the petition filed by R Gopal Reddy and dismissed the proceedings initiated against him under various sections of the Act. The court stated, "There should be more than prima facie material to hold that the owner or occupier of the premises was in complete knowledge of what was happening in the premises, as Section 25 creates a vicarious liability against the person who is the owner who has knowingly permitted usage of premises, knowledge pervades the provision of law."

According to the prosecution, Victory, an event management company, inquired about renting the petitioner's property for a birthday celebration. They paid Rs 1,10,000 to the property manager. On May 20, a raid was conducted based on credible information, and several narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances were seized. The premises were sealed, and the owner was made an accused in the case.

The petitioner, a 68-year-old residing elsewhere, argued that the property was managed by a property manager. The prosecution countered that the petitioner's knowledge is a matter of trial and that he cannot escape the law as the investigation is ongoing.

The bench observed that the official who conducted the seizure stated that the petitioner was unaware of the situation. No other person has implicated the petitioner regarding knowledge of drug consumption or distribution on the premises on the said date.

The court referred to Section 25 of the Act, which deals with the punishment for allowing premises to be used for committing an offence. It held that since the petitioner, according to the search party, was unaware of the activities on the premises, it would be unjust to try him under Section 25 of the Act, despite the presumption raised by Section 35 of the Act against the petitioner.

> **"There should be more than prima facie material to hold that owner of premises was in know of what was happening in the premises** –HC bench

Woman groped: Case against astrologer, husband stays

The High Court has declined to quash proceedings against an astrologer accused of outraging a woman's modesty by inappropriately touching her under the pretext of performing a puja to rectify her kundali.

The Court also refused to dismiss charges against the woman's husband, who had taken her to the astrologer and threatened her not to disclose the incident to anyone.

Justice MG Uma, presiding over a single judge bench, rejected the petition filed by Deepa Darshan HP and Mohandas alias Shivaramu, who sought to quash the prosecution registered against them under Sections 498A, 354, 354A, 508 R/W 34 of the Indian Penal Code.

The complainant's counsel maintained that the allegations in the previous crime were entirely different from the current one.

The astrologer committed the offence by inappropriately touching her body under the guise of performing a puja to rectify her kundali.

The husband, who was present, neither protested nor protected the complainant, and the specific allegations against both accused constitute the offence.

IN BRIEF

61 workers demand their jobs back

The Karnataka Safai Karamchari Commission visited CABS DRDO during the protest being conducted by 61 Safai Karamcharis demanding their employment, and directed them to comply with the directions of the Minister for Social Welfare and take the 61 workers back to work. The Commission who also spoke to the workers at the protest site said that a meeting would be called next week with the Director CABS DRDO to ensure implementation of the order. The workers are set to continue their struggle till their demands are met.

The 61 Safai Karamcharis were allegedly illegally terminated by CABS-DRDO for fighting against extortion and protested outside the CABS establishment demanding that they be immediately provided work. The workers who are all members of the Karnataka General Labour Union (AICCTU) have been fighting for the last five months against the illegal termination. All the workers are women from marginalised communities who have been working for several years at the institution. The Minister for Social Welfare and Chairperson of Karnataka Safai Karamchari Commission had directed DRDO to reinstate the workers on 8 July 2024. However, DRDO CABS has refused to comply with the direction.

The workers have been protesting demanding they be taken to employment from 2 September outside the CABS establishment. On 3 September, the workers noted that the DRDO has barricaded the office and stifled the voices and rights of the workers. The workers have added that it is necessary for the Ministry of Defence, under whom DRDO falls, to answer as to why these workers are being targeted. **BMB**

Cloth bags are in: Vendors, customers take note

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Volunteers distributed placard to vendors in Domlur on Tuesday

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) kicked off the second phase of its 'Own bag or pay for a bag' initiative in Domlur on Tuesday. BBMP has taken up the campaign in association with Bangalore Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML) and a city-based citizen-volunteer group.

The civic body distributed free paper straws and cloth bags to 25 vegetable/fruit sellers and other shopkeepers in and around Domlur Layout. The vendors and shopkeepers have been instructed to sell cloth bags and paper straws to the customers instead of plastic/paper bags or plastic straws.

"Apart from the 25 vendors and shopkeepers that attended the meeting, volunteers also spoke to many vegetables/fruits in the market area. Twenty cloth bags were distributed free of cost to every vendor and they would be able to sell them for Rs 5 and Rs10 per piece. This will ensure they can follow the rules around banned sup items, make a profit, and do business with dignity," said Odette Katrak, Co-founder of Beautiful Bharat, the volunteer group that is assisting BBMP and BSWML.

According to an official from BSWML, starting Thursday, vendors found selling or giving away banned plastic carry bags or other items to customers will be penalised.

"We are focusing on spreading awareness on the first two days of the campaign. Starting Thursday, vendors will have to cough up Rs 500 for every violation. Starting Monday, customers walking with plastic bags will also be fined," said the official.

Vendors shared their concerns about the use of cloth bags and losing customers.

"I have tried giving paper straws to customers. However, more often than not, the customers refuse to use it saying paper straws have a peculiar smell. They demand plastic straws," said a coconut water vendor in the area.

However, the majority were excited about the opportunity to make a profit selling the cloth bags.

"We end up spending Rs 1,200 to 1,500 per month on buying plastic carry bags. We hand over these bags to customers free of cost. On top of that, we also pay fines to BBMP when marshals come checking for banned plastic bags. A head start with free cloth bags will go a long way for us," said a vegetable vendor in Domlur Layout.

Volunteers also distributed placards about rules on banned single-use plastic among shopkeepers.

Potholes on the road put huge dent in BMTC's timetable

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

set timeframe and complete a certain number of trips each day. However, with every road marred by potholes, reaching these locations on time has become a challenge. Consequently, when some trips are missed, higher authorities issue notices to the drivers and conductors asking for explanations.

Frequent bus breakdowns

"Many roads in the city are plagued by large potholes. Buses that are not in the best condition frequently break down on these roads. Common issues include chassis cuts, brake failures, clutch problems, and punctured tires due to debris and other obstacles. Every day, at least five-six buses break down.

Even on regular days, vehicles must be driven slowly on pothole-filled roads. When it rains, extra caution and slower speeds are necessary. Water flows like a river on the roads, and it becomes a challenge for drivers to identify and navigate through the potholes," said a bus driver.

Bike round to check potholes!

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar stated that he will be going on a bike tour around Bengaluru to identify potholes. When asked about the pothole issue, he said, "We have identified 2,795 potholes in Bengaluru, and officials have been given a 15-day deadline to address them. Additionally, repair work on main thoroughfares will be undertaken at a cost of Rs 660 crore. We have launched an app to allow the public to upload pictures of potholes in their areas. Since officials have only been showing us the main roads, I have decided to conduct a city tour on a bike, and I will also take the Commissioner along for a city tour."

Fuel efficiency

According to BMTC regulations, a bus should travel 5 km per litre of diesel. "However, due to traffic jams and pothole-filled roads, this target is unattainable, and buses are in poor shape. Slowly driving through these pothole-ridden roads and frequently stopping in traffic make it impossible to adhere to the diesel limits.

If a bus is turned off during a traffic jam, it might not start immediately when the signal changes. Due to these challenges, buses are getting only 3 to 4 km per litre of diesel, leading to an additional consumption of 4-5 litres of diesel daily," added another BMTC driver.

Drivers said that setting specific arrival times for BMTC buses in a city like Bengaluru is impractical. "The combined problems of traffic jams and potholes make it difficult to maintain schedules.

If maintaining schedules is essential, the roads should be repaired, or separate lanes, like Metro tracks, should be provided for BMTC buses. Moreover, the buses are not in good enough condition to operate on these pothole-filled roads," said another driver.

According to him, If the roads were well-maintained and the traffic issues reduced, the journey time could be managed.

"For example, it currently takes 1 hour 50 minutes to reach Sadahalli from the Kempegowda Bus Station, with a scheduled travel time of 2 hours.

However, now an additional 45 minutes to an hour is required. Similarly, reaching Bannerghatta from Majestic, which should take an hour, now requires an extra 30 to 45 minutes. Reaching Hoskote, which is scheduled to take 1 hour 45 minutes, now takes an additional 45 minutes.

BMTC buses traveling to various locations like Nelamangala, Dasarahalli, Hessarghatta, Yelahanka, Kadugodi, Bidadi, Kengeri, Koramangala, and Laggere need 45 minutes to an hour of extra time compared to the scheduled time. During peak hours from 8 to 10.30 am and 4.3o to 7 pm, an additional two hours is required," the driver said.

8 repair cases daily

"As soon as buses come in for repair, we fix them. However, when buses travel on these extremely pothole-ridden roads, there are frequent cases of string wires getting cut," said a technical officer of BMTC.

He said that of late they have been seeing more issues like punctures, nut and bolt dislodgement, and clutch cuts. "We see six-eight such cases daily, compared to two-four just five or six months ago.

If a bus gets a puncture, it takes a long time for our technical staff to reach the spot and fix the issue. If a trip or two is missed due to this, it results in losses for the corporation, and the repair costs also increase," said the officer.

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CHANGE OF NAME

I, Gangaraj M S/o Muninanja Reddy R/o #39 Kankapura Main Rd, Pattareddy palya kaggalipura B'lore-560082 have changed my name to Gangaraju M.

I, Rushinada Venkateswara Subramanyam R/o 315, 1st flr, 7th Cross, 3rd Main, Domlur Lyt,B'luru 560071 have changed my name to Rushinarada Venkateswara Subramanyam Affidavit Dt.03/09/2024 notary Harisha G, B'luru

I Nallasamy Latchumana Perumal S/O, Lakshmana Perumal R/o Flat No C-124, Vakil Marigold Apartment Vakil Whispering Woods, Iggaluru, Chandapura, Bengaluru - 560099 Karnataka have changed my name to Nallaswamy Lakshmana Perumal.

I, Mohamed Ibrahim S/o Liyakath Ali Khan R/o No.22 1st cross, RT nagar, Kothitopu Tumkur 572101 present camp Bengaluru have changed my name to Mohammad Ibrahim Khan Affidavit Dt.03/09/2024 notary Harisha G, B'luru

I, Keyur Ramesh Kheni, R/o No.935, 1st B Main Road, S.T.Bed Layout, 4th Block Koramangala, Bengaluru-560034 have changed my minor daughter name from Aarya to Aarya Keyur Kheni

I, Subhasini G W/o Karthikeyan jeyapal R/o A904,9th Floor VMAKS Laurel Attibele Sarjapura RD, Bidaraguppe B'luru-562107 have changed my name to Subhasini for all purposes.

I, Prakash Ashok Malebennur R/o 483, Station road, Ranebennur, Haveri 581115 today camp at Bengaluru have changed my name to Prakash Malebennur Affidavit Dt.03/09/2024 notary Harisha G, B'luru

I, Poorvi Sultania R/o No.151, King Life Bel Air T3002, Jakkasandra Extn, Koramangala, Bengaluru 560034 have changed my name to Poorvi Poddar Affidavit Dt.03/09/2024 notary Harisha G, B'luru

I, Syed Jabber S/O, Shafi R/o No -301 2nd Floor Kranti Enclave 5th Cross East Akshay Nagar Bangalore 560068 have changed my name to Zabee for all purposes.

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Dengue 'officially' declared epidemic

The Karnataka government has officially declared dengue fever, including its severe forms, as an 'epidemic disease' under the Karnataka Epidemic Diseases Act, 2020. This move has led to the introduction of stringent regulations aimed at curbing the spread of the vector-borne illness. The declaration, made under Section 3 of the Act, empowers the state to take decisive actions to manage and control the spread of dengue. In addition, the government has amended the Karnataka Epidemic Diseases Regulation, 2020, to enforce stricter responsibilities on individuals and entities to prevent mosquito breeding.

The amended regulations introduce penalties across three categories: households, commercial establishments, and active construction sites. For households, the penalty is set at Rs 400 in urban areas and Rs 200 in rural areas. Commercial establishments face fines of Rs 1,000 in urban regions and Rs 500 in rural areas. Owners of active

construction sites, that provide space for mosquito breeding, will be fined Rs 2,000 in urban localities and Rs 1,000 in rural areas.

The regulations mandate that owners and occupants of buildings must take all necessary precautions to prevent mosquito breeding. This includes covering or securing water storage containers, sumps, and overhead tanks with lids or other materials, as well as properly disposing of solid waste to avoid water accumulation. It is also required that items such as empty vessels, pot saucers, cans, containers, unused tyres, or any other solid waste are not left in conditions that could collect and retain water, which might become breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

The regulations further emphasise that all individuals, institutions, and agencies must take care to prevent the collection or accumulation of water within or outside their premises to avoid becoming a nuisance to neighbours or the community by providing a breeding ground for mosquitoes. The competent authority is empowered to enter and inspect premises, issue directions, levy penalties, and implement all remedial measures and guidelines prescribed by the state's Health and Family Welfare Department to curb the spread of dengue.

"If a person served with a notice fails or refuses to take the specified measures within the given time frame, the competent authority or its authorised officer may carry out the necessary actions. The costs incurred in executing these measures will be recovered from the defaulter. These regulations are part of a broader effort by the Karnataka government to control the spread of dengue and protect public health," said an official. **BMB**

When crematorium's power was cut off

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

bothering about inconvenience to those who want to cremate the mortal remains of their relatives.

"Today I witnessed the saddest day pertaining to our Kalpalli Electric Crematorium that since the BMBP has not paid the electricity bills, electricity supply was stopped by the Bescom.

People working at the crematorium are using generators to cremate bodies. Due to lack of electricity, the people working at the crematorium have asked people to take the bodies to other crematoriums," said Kumar, a resident of the area.

Coming down heavily on Bescom, NS Ravi, president of Bharathinagar Residents Forum, said that he was ashamed of Bescom officials for disconnecting electricity to the crematorium which is an essential service. "It seems the Bescom officials have no concern towards the public. Disconnecting electricity supply to the crematorium must be condemned," Ravi said.

Blaming the Bescom and the BBMP for being negligent towards the public, Mohan Dasari, Karnataka Secretary of Aam Aadmi Party said the Bescom have no courage to disconnect electricity of malls and commercial establishments owned by people with political clout or influence.

"It is the responsibility of the BBMP to pay the electricity bills on time. It is the responsibility of the Bescom to ensure electricity supply to the crematoriums in the city," said Dasari.

Meanwhile, BBMP Executive Engineer Ramesh said that the crematorium runs up an electricity bill of Rs 2 lakh per month. "I am not aware of the delay in making payment to Bescom. No one informed me about disconnecting electricity to the crematorium," he said.

HEALTH TIP: Litchi is excellent for skin care since it eliminates acne and blemishes

Peaches are also high in fluoride, which aids in the prevention of tooth cavities

NOT SKIN DEEP

Young girls are using anti-aging products they see on social media. The harm is real

When she was in fifth grade, Scarlett Goddard Strahan started to worry about getting wrinkles.

By the time she turned 10, Scarlett and her friends were spending hours on TikTok and YouTube watching influencers tout products for achieving today's beauty aesthetic: a dewy, "glowy," flawless complexion. Scarlett developed an elaborate skin care routine with facial cleansers, mists, hydrating masks and moisturizers.

One night, Scarlett's skin began to burn intensely and erupted in blisters. Heavy use of adult-strength products had wreaked havoc on her skin. Months later, patches of tiny bumps remain on Scarlett's face, and her cheeks turn red in the sun.

"I didn't want to get wrinkles and look old," says Scarlett, who recently turned 11. "If I had known my life would be so affected by this, I never would have put these things on my face."

Scarlett's experience has become common, experts say, as preteen girls around the country throng beauty stores to buy high-end skin care products, a trend captured in viral videos with the hashtag #SephoraKids. Girls as young as 8 are turning up at dermatologists' offices with rashes, chemical burns and other allergic reactions to products not intended for children's sensitive skin.

"When kids use anti-aging skin care, they can actually cause premature aging, destroy the skin barrier and lead to permanent scarring," says Dr. Brooke Jeffy, a Scottsdale, Arizona, dermatologist who has posted her own social media videos rebutting influencers' advice.

More than the physical harm, parents and child psychologists worry about the trend's effects on girls' mental health — for years to come. Extensive data suggests a fixation on appearance can affect self-esteem and body image and fuel anxiety, depression and eating disorders.

Skin care obsession

The skin care obsession offers a window into the role social media plays in the lives of today's youth and how it shapes the ideals and insecurities of girls in particular. Girls are experiencing high levels of sadness and hopelessness. Whether social media exposure causes or simply correlates with mental health problems is up for debate. But to older teens and young adults, it's clear: Extended time on social media has been bad for them, period.

Young girls' fascination with makeup and cosmetics is not new. Neither are kids who hold themselves to idealized beauty standards. What's different now is the magnitude, says Kris Perry, executive director of Children and Screens, a nonprofit that studies how digital media impacts child development. In an era of filtered images and artificial intelligence, some of the beautiful faces they encounter aren't even real.

"Girls are being bombarded with idealised images of beauty that establish a beauty standard that could be very hard — if not impossible — to attain," Perry says. The obsession with skin care is about more than the pursuit of perfect skin, explains 14-year-old Mia Hall.

It's about feeling accepted and belonging to a community that has the lifestyle and look you want, says Mia, a New Yorker from the Bronx.

Skin care was not on Mia's radar until she started eighth grade last fall. It was a topic of conversation among girls her age — at school and on social media. Girls bonded over their skin care routines.

"Everyone was doing it. I felt like it was the only way I could fit in," says Mia. She started following beauty influencers like Katie Fang and Gianna Christine, who have millions of young followers on TikTok. Some influencers are paid by brands to promote their products, but they don't always mention that.

Mia got hooked on "Get Ready With Me" videos, where influencers film themselves getting ready — for school, for a night out with friends, packing for a trip. The hashtag #GRWM has over 150 billion views on TikTok.

"It's like a trance. You can't stop watching it," Mia says. "So when they tell me, 'Go buy this product' or, 'I use this and it's amazing,' it feels very personal. Getting what they have makes me feel connected to them."

Mia started saving her $20 weekly allowance for trips with friends to Sephora. Her daily routine included a face wash, a facial mist, a hydrating serum, a pore-tightening toner, a moisturizer and sunscreen. Most were luxury brands like Glow Recipe, Drunk Elephant or Caudalie, whose moisturizers can run $70.

The level of detail and information girls are getting from beauty tutorials sends a troubling message at a vulnerable age, as girls are going through puberty and searching for their identities, says Charlotte Markey, a body image expert and Rutgers University psychologist.

"The message to young girls is that, 'You are a never-ending project to get started on now.' And essentially: 'You are not OK the way you are'," says Markey, author of "The Body Image Book for Girls."

The beauty industry has been cashing in on the trend. Last year, consumers under age 14 drove 49% of drug store skin sales, according to a NielsonIQ report that found households with teens and tweens were outspending the average American household on skin care. And in the first half of 2024, a third of "prestige" beauty sales, at stores like Sephora, were driven by households with tweens and teens, according to market research firm Circana.

The cosmetics industry has acknowledged certain products aren't suitable for children but has done little to stop kids from buying them. Drunk Elephant's website, for example, recommends kids 12 and under should not use their anti-aging serums, lotions and scrubs "due to their very active nature." That guidance is on the site's FAQ page; there are no such warnings on the products themselves.

Sephora declined to comment for this story.

Dicey ingredients

Ingredients like retinol and chemical exfoliants like hydroxy acids are inherently harsh. For aging skin, they are used to stimulate collagen and cell production. Young or sensitive skin can react with redness, peeling and burning that can lead to infections, acne and hypersensitivity if used incorrectly, dermatologists say.

Dermatologists agree a child's face typically needs only three items, all found on drugstore shelves: a gentle cleanser, a moisturizer and sunscreen.

Around the country, concerned mothers are visiting dermatologists with their young daughters, carrying bags filled with their child's skin care products to ask: Are these OK?

In Sacramento, California, Scarlett missed early signs the products were hurting her skin: She developed a rash and felt a stinging sensation, within days of trying out viral skin care products. Scarlett figured she wasn't using enough, so she layered on more. That's when her cheeks erupted in blistering pain.

"It was late at night. She came running into my room crying. All of her cheeks had been burned," recalls Anna Goddard, Scarlett's mother, who hadn't realized the extent of Scarlett's skin care obsession. When Goddard read the ingredients in each product, she was shocked to find retinol in products that appeared to be marketed to children — including a facial sheet mask with a cat's face on the packaging.

Goddard hopes to see more protections. "I didn't know there were harmful ingredients being put in skin care that is marketed to kids," she says. "There has to be some type of warning." —AP

All you need to know about...

Burping too much

Dietary habits
While belching or burping is a normal physiological function, a new study on Tuesday revealed that dietary habits or a disease could be the reason.

Issues
About 10,000 persons participated in an online survey administered by researchers at Osaka Metropolitan University in Japan to investigate the association between the prevalence of belching disorders, comorbidities, and lifestyles.
Based on the results, 151 individuals, or 1.5 per cent of the total, had belching issues. This was more common in men, alcohol drinkers, and people on acid reflux medicine.

Belching disorders
"The problem with belching disorders is that they take a long time to treat and are only practised in a limited number of medical facilities," said Professor Yasuhiro Fujiwara from the varsity's Graduate School of Medicine.
"In the future, the evaluation of the number of times someone chews and the effects of improved dietary habits in patients with belching disorders will provide a treatment option for patients to perform on their own," Fujiwara said.

Links established
Moreover, studies showed a strong association between gastrointestinal disorders, finishing food before feeling full, excessive chewing frequencies (either very low or extremely high), and burp problems.
These results imply that the development of belching issues is significantly influenced by underlying gut health and dietary practices.

How to treat
The study disproved beliefs by finding no connection between excessive carbonated beverage use and burp problems. So people must address their dietary habits and gut health, the researchers noted. —IANS

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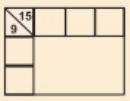
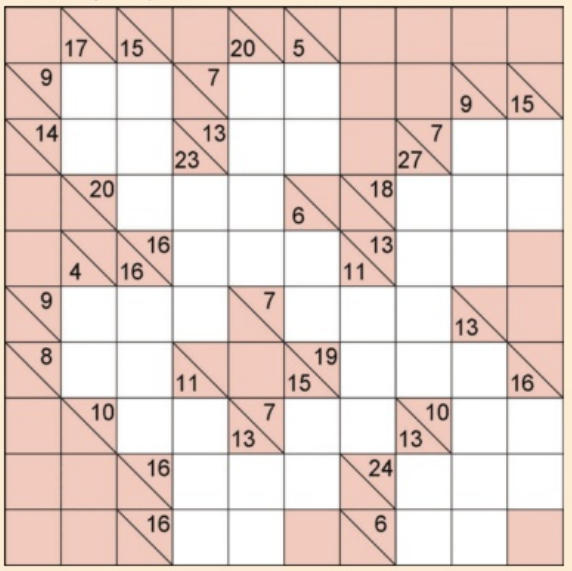
Kakuro

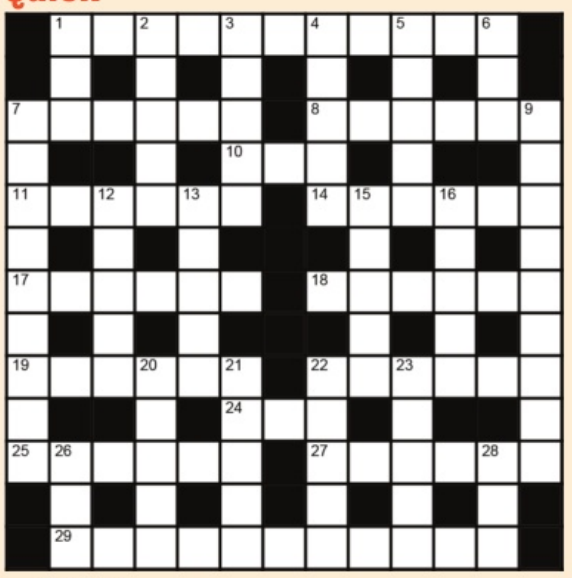
The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.



Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

1 Show (11)
7 Undernourished or starving (3-3)
8 Gains knowledge (6)
10 Night before (3)
11 Retinues (6)
14 Taken illegally (6)
17 Lively (6)
18 Shim (6)
19 Light meals (6)
22 Colouring stick (6)
24 Dove sound (3)
25 Arctic plain (6)
27 Fourth President of India (1,1,4)
29 Diligent in one's job (11)

DOWN

1 Indian dish (3)
2 Civilian clothes (5)
3 Knobs on roots or branches (5)
4 Terra-cotta roofing (5)
5 Texas shrine (5)
6 Long time (3)
7 En route (2,7)
9 Festival celebrated in January (9)
12 Sicilian nymph–"a neat" change? (5)
13 Serbian tennis star Djokovic's first name (5)
15 Hoglike animal (5)
16 Fortunate (5)
20 Yielded (5)
21 Marks; blemishes (5)
22 Protection (5)
23 English as a prefix (5)
26 India's real-time payment system (3)
28 Ethiopian prince (3)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: N EQUALS G

FJV RPLPD XBJA ZPGDRYRN. YO FJV EGLP G BPGKEPD, FJV RPLPD XBJA CPYRN G XBVQPRB.

Linemaro

If you were type, I'd kern u s closer together

Mindchow

To succeed in life, you need 3 bones: A wishbone, a backbone and a funny bone

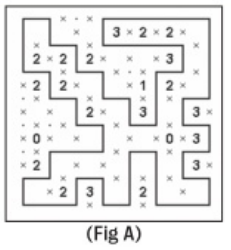
Joke of the day

Short people: God only lets things grow until they're perfect. Some of us didn't take as long as the others

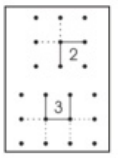
Loop

Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.



(Fig A)

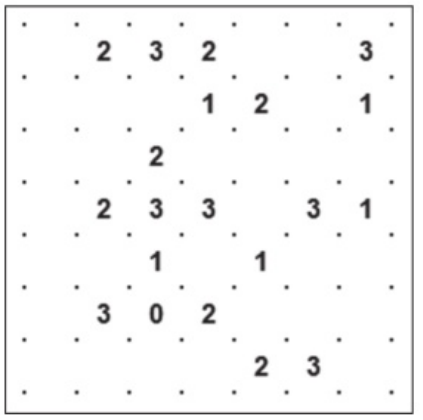


(Fig B) Not Allowed

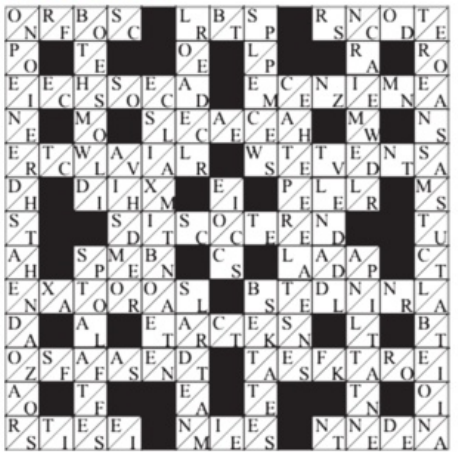
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



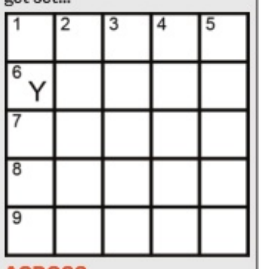
Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...



ACROSS

1 N buss; 6 Do lye; 7 Ogled; 8 Dupes; 9 Mrs he

DOWN

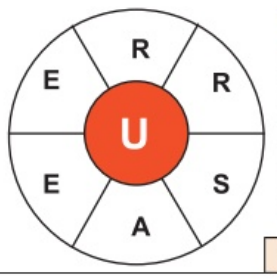
1 Sly PH; 2 One so; 3 Re Dud; 4 Bug me; 5 Se LSD

Mensapuzzle

Solve this dingbat:

THOUDEEPGHT

Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

04 Average; 05 Good; 07 Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

6			5					
3	8	2			9		6	1
	9			6			7	
				1		9		
7			4		3			2
		4		5				
	4			2			8	
2	6		8			7	5	4
					4			3

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy = 12

5 6 8 9

Medium = 3

3 3 5 8

Hard = 3

3 8 8 8

Hocusfocus

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

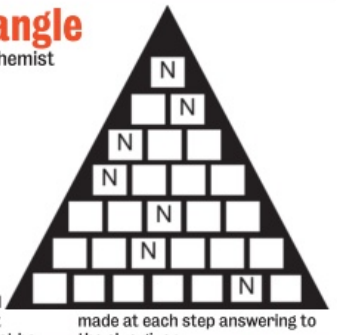
Differences: 1. Stripes on shirt are different. 2. Lapel is missing. 3. Branch is not as long. 4. Bush is smaller. 5. Door handle is lower. 6. Hair is different.

Riddler

Find the missing number;
63 : 84 -> 16 55 : 41 -> 21 49 : 66 -> 35 72 : 93 -> ?

Alpha triangle

1 Nitrogen for the chemist
2 _ target
3 Neither's mate
4 Benchmark
5 Estate
6 Release money
7 Leaves stranded



Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE

COMICS

Popeye

Bizarrotrip

Diamond Lil

Hart of the city

HEY, BRENT! SEE YOU AT ANIME CLUB!
SEE YA!
BRENT! DID YOU WATCH "SHAOLIN CHANGES" LAST NIGHT?
IT WAS SO GOOD! WE'LL TALK MORE AT ANIME CLUB!
PEOPLE LOVE YOU, BRENT! NOW YOU JUST NEED TO DO THE ANIME CLUB PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE. HOW ARE YOUR PUBLIC SPEAKING SKILLS?
UUUU

A big round of applause
Pedro Almodovar's 'The Room Next Door' receives 18-minute long ovation at Venice Film Festival

BangaloreMirror | 12
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BREAK-UP RITUAL

Ananya Panday reveals what she did with photos of an ex

Ananya Panday, who is gearing up for the upcoming series Call Me Bae, recently opened up about her personal experiences with relationships during an interview. In a candid moment, she shared a relatable secret many women harbour regarding how to deal with memories of an ex. Her revelations, which include burning an ex-boyfriend's photo and maintaining a box of mementos, were inspired by American television personality Kourtney Kardashian.

During a conversation on Fever FM, Ananya was asked whether she had ever disposed of a photo of an ex in a dramatic fashion. With a laugh, she responded, "No, I've burned it, not flushed it. What if it gets stuck? That would be a bigger disaster." This humorous take on a common breakup ritual resonated with many listeners, highlighting the lengths to which people go to move on from past

When probed further about whether she kept any souvenirs from her past relationships, Ananya revealed, "Yes, I had an ex-box with some things and memories. I think Kourtney Kardashian did something similar; she had an ex-box filled with items." This revelation not only humanizes the actress but also connects her to a broader cultural phenomenon where individuals curate keepsakes from past romances.

The 'Student of the Year 2' actress is recently rumoured to be dating Walker Blanco, their dating rumours sparked when a video of Ananya cosying up with Walker while dancing at Anant's baraat went viral.

Ananya's upcoming series, 'Call Me Bae', is set to premiere on September 6, 2024. The show follows her character, Bae, who begins her journey in a world of wealth and privilege. However, her life takes a turn, forcing her to start anew in Mumbai.

While discussing her role, in an interview with ETimes, Ananya noted the contrast between her character and her real-life persona. She remarked, "It was nice to look at the world through Bae's eyes, because I think we get too caught up in stuff like 'this is wrong, that is wrong, what people are talking about me?'," — **ETimes**

Maybe next time

Sushmita Sen never fails to win over everyone with her dignified stance and grace. The actress is always known to be loving and kind, even towards the paparazzi. Sushmita was spotted in Mumbai on Monday night and it made us feel she was undergoing some health issue, or something in her foot. One saw her ex boyfriend and friend Rohman Shawl getting out of the car first. As Sushmita got out of the car, she asked one of her staff members to hold her hand.

Later, even when she walked, she seemed uncomfortable or looked like she's in pain. One hopes the actress is doing fine and gets better soon in case there is some health concern. Yet, Sushmita who looked gorgeous in a black casual attire, posed for the paps. She smiled at them, threw a flying kiss and said, "Thoda jaldi mein hoon...agli baar (I am running late, next time...)."

Sushmita also asked the paps about their well-being.

Sushmita and Rohman were dating for a while and they

announced their break-up on social media in 2021. She had said that while the relationship is no longer, their friendship remains. Ever since the actress suffered from a heart attack, Rohman has been spending a lot of time with Sushmita. —**ETimes**

Song stress

Tamannaah Bhatia, who stole the limelight with 'Aaj Ki Raat' song in the blockbuster 'Stree 2', featuring Shraddha Kapoor, Rajkummar Rao, and Pankaj Tripathi—recently opened up about her electrifying cameo. The actress also shared her determination to avoid being typecast, emphasising her desire to break free from any creative boxes.

The actress admitted in an interview with Grazia feeling apprehensive about her performance in Stree 2. She worried whether she could outshine her previous work, especially after the massive success of 'Kaavaalaa.' Taking on the song for Stree 2 felt like a risky move, leaving her uncertain if she could surpass her earlier achievements.

Kaavaalaa became a global sensation, dominating social media with its upbeat rhythm. With such success, why did Tamannaah take on "Aaj Ki Raat"? It was the film's director, Amar Kaushik, who gave her the confidence to say yes, assuring her that the song would be a perfect fit for Stree 2.

Tamannaah explained that when Amar Kaushik approached her with the song, emphasizing its crucial role in the storyline, she instinctively felt it was an opportunity she couldn't pass up. His assurance convinced her that it was the right move, leading her to take on the project.

In the interview, Tamannaah shared that she's always eager to take on shorter roles if they come at pivotal moments in the story. Reflecting on her career, she mentioned a phase where she was often typecast as the girl-next-door, prompting her to seek out unexpected roles. For her, it was never about the length of the part but about leaving a lasting impression on the audience. —**ETimes**

SANDALWOOD SHOTS

Y MAHESWARA REDDY

Cut weight, hair

Deepika Das, who has acted in a few Kannada movies and one Telugu movie, is excited about her latest movie Paru Parvathy. "I play Payal in the movie. This character is very close to my heart as it is similar to my real life. Director Rohith wanted me to lose weight. I worked hard to lose 10 kg in one month by hitting the gym at Nagarabhavi twice a day," Deepika said.

About her mother's reaction when she had a haircut, Deepika said her mother refused to look at her. "My mother told me that she is not happy with me for getting a haircut without informing her. I had my haircut as per the director's advice. The director wanted me to look like a traveler. I had to forgo other opportunities because my hair was too short to get hair extensions," she said.

According to her, the film stars actors from different states. "It was adventurous to be amidst actors from different states," she said.

Once again!

Director Anup Bhandari, known for Kannada movie 'Vikrant Rona' is all set to collaborate with Kichcha Sudeep again. K Niranjan Reddy and Chaithanya Reddy, who bankrolled the Telugu film Hanuman, have teamed up with Sudeep and Bhandari.

The makers unveiled the 'Official Logo' of Billa Ranga Baasha along with a concept video introducing the story set in the future, on Sudeep's birthday. Bhandari known for his detailing and unique approach in his films has left no stone unturned in the video.

Bhandari said Niranjan Reddy wanted to collaborate with him after watching Vikrant Rona. "We met before during the post-production of Hanuman. When I narrated that my next will also be with Sudeep and narrated the premise of Billa Ranga Baasha, he was thrilled. They wanted to mount their next project on a big scale, and Billa Ranga Baasha was perfect for it."

Bhandari said working with Sudeep has been a great experience. "People loved Vikrant Rona and I'm sure they'll love this even more. Sudeep sir calling this his biggest film is a huge compliment and also a bigger responsibility to shoulder," he said.